

REMARKS

The Examiner's communication dated May 25, 2005 has been received and carefully considered. In conformance with the applicable statutory requirements, this paper constitutes a complete reply and/or a bona fide attempt to advance the application to allowance. Specifically, claims 1, 6-12, 18, 22 and 23 have been amended and claims 4 and 5 have been cancelled. Reexamination and/or reconsideration of the application as amended are respectfully requested.

Summary of the Office Action

Claims 12-17 were objected to for minor informalities.

Claims 1-12 and 18-23 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Mori et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,007,259).

Claims 13-17 were indicated as containing allowable subject matter.

**The Claims Distinguish Patentably
Over the References of Record**

Claim 12 has been amended as suggested by the Examiner and, accordingly, calls for a slide rotationally fast and axially displaceable on a rod for engaging a lever with the inside of at least one of the at least three segments upon rotation of the middle segment relative to the first segment in one direction. In the Office Action, the Examiner indicated that previously presented claim 12 was examined as if the lever was used as a functional statement; however, the Examiner stated that if the lever was intended to be a positive limitation then the claims should recite "a lever". Thus, claim 12 now conforms with the Examiner's suggested language and recites "a lever". Since the Examiner has indicated that the prior art does not show a clamping lever acting on a first segment and linked to a third segment or that the clamping device is a lever that engages the inside of three segments upon rotation of the middle segment, Applicants submit that claim 12 and claims 13-16 dependent therefrom are now in condition for allowance.

Claim 1 has been amended to call for a fixing device to be formed as a clamping device that has a rod guided rotationally fast in the first segment and disposed rotatably in the middle and third segments, and a slide rotationally fast and axially displaceable on the rod for engaging a lever with the inside of at least one of the three segments upon rotation

of the middle segment relative to the first segment in one direction. As already mentioned, the Examiner indicated in the Office Action at page 4 that the prior art does not show a clamping lever acting on a first segment and being linked to a third segment or a clamping device that is a lever that engages the inside of three segments upon rotation of the middle segment. Accordingly, Applicants submit that claim 1 and claims 2-3; 6-11 and 7-22 dependent therefrom are now in condition for allowance.

Claim 23, as amended, calls for a fixing device formed as a clamping device having a rod guided rotationally fast in the first segment and disposed rotatably in the middle of third segments, and a slide rotationally fast and axially displaceable on the rod for engaging a lever with the inside of at least one of the three segments upon rotation of the middle segment relative to the first segment in one direction. As already indicated, the Examiner has stated that such an arrangement is not shown in the prior art. Accordingly, Applicants submit that claim 23 is in condition for allowance.

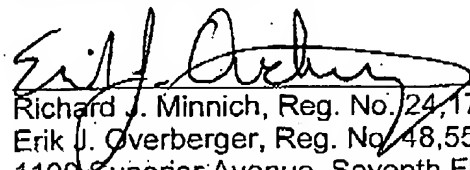
CONCLUSION

All formal and informal matters having been addressed, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. It is believed that the claim changes clearly place the application in condition for allowance. Alternatively, if the Examiner is of the view that the application is not in clear condition for allowance, it is requested that the Examiner telephone the undersigned for purposes of conducting a telephone interview to resolve any outstanding differences. Accordingly, an early notice of allowance is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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August 10, 2005
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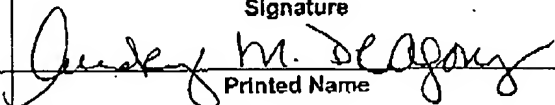
CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

Under 37 C.F.R. § 1.8, I certify that this Response to Final Action is being

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